



HOW TO HANDLE THE MEDIA WHEN YOU WANT TO WRITE FOR THE POPULAR PRESS

Writing for the media can be an excellent way of marketing your services as well as gaining public awareness of what coaching is about. The first step is to research the relevant publications you want to write for and these could include:

- local newspapers
- daily and weekly local papers – this includes free papers
- daily national and/or Sunday papers
- any relevant specialist publications
- women's pages and health pages within existing publications such as national newspapers and magazines

Having completed your research you need to:

- read and make notes about each publication
- think about who reads it and what the interests of readership are?
- consider the style of writing and the length of articles currently published

Remember this is the popular press

For those with little or no experience of writing for the popular press, free magazines may be the best place to start. In 1985 I contacted a local monthly magazine and found myself, within a matter of days, with the title of Health Editor. They needed material and I was willing to provide it. I wrote a column on a monthly basis for the Blackheath Guide for three years and found it a valuable learning experience. If you want to learn about working to deadlines with the extra pressure of finding a new topic month after month this is the way to do it.

Your next step is to:

- find out the name of the news or features editor and contact whoever is in charge of the page or publication you wish to write for. Addresses and contact details can be found in telephone directories and reference books such as the PNA media directory – but they are expensive.
- send brief details about yourself together with samples of any existing published work to the person concerned with an outline of what you want to write about
- telephone your contact about 8-10 days later – give them time to receive and read the material – it is not uncommon for it to have got lost – so be prepared to send it again
- It would be unrealistic if you were not prepared for an outright rejection!
- be prepared to be asked about other ideas you have – so have some in reserve!

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